

Indiana's Stellar Communities Program



*Call for
Letters of Interest*



January 17, 2016

INDIANA'S STELLAR COMMUNITIES REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST (LOI)

The Stellar Communities Program team is seeking Letters of Interest from Local Units of Government (LUGs) that would like to participate in the State of Indiana's Stellar Communities Program.

Indiana's Stellar Communities Program is a collaborative effort between INDOT, IHCD, OCRA, OSBE, ISDH, Serve Indiana, IBB, IAC and IDNR. These State of Indiana agencies seek to engage two communities to achieve a three-year revitalization strategy. In the revitalization strategy communities will identify areas of interest and types of projects, produce a schedule to complete projects, produce cost estimates, identify local match amounts, sources, and additional funding resources, indicate the level of community impact, and describe the significance each project will have on the overall comprehensive revitalization of the community. From this revitalization strategy, communities will produce a three-year community investment plan which will identify capital and quality of life projects to be completed during that period.

Below you will find the key dates for the 2016 Stellar Communities program:

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| • Call for Letters of Interest Webinar | January 13, 2016 |
| • Informational Forum/Workshop | January 27, 2016 |
| • Letters of Interest due | March 11, 2016 |
| • Announcement of Finalists | April 5, 2016 |
| • Finalists Workshop | April 21, 2016 |
| • Strategic Investment Plans due | July 1, 2016 |
| • Site visits and evaluations | July 20 – August 15, 2016 |
| • Designation announcements | August 2016 (at the State Fair) |
| • Community celebrations | September 2016 |
| • Kick-off meetings | October 2016 |

Eligibility

Eligible participants must be a Local Unit of Government that is a city or an incorporated town not located within an entitlement community. Only communities that participate in the State CDBG program are eligible.

Participants will fall into two divisions. Division I is defined as Local Units of Governments (LUGs) with populations equal to or greater than 6,000. Division II is defined as LUGs with populations less than 6,000.

Cities and towns that are within a MPO's Planning or Urbanized area are eligible for the Stellar Communities program; however, the following criteria must be clarified:

1. If the community falls within an MPO's Planning Area, they must have a letter of recommendation from the MPO for the proposed projects.
2. If the community falls within an MPO urbanized area, they must have approval from the MPO for the proposed projects. If selected, any funding for the proposed projects *must be financed by the MPO*.

Eligible participants must be in compliance and in good standing with all partner agencies.

The LUG may subcontract with either not-for-profit entities and/or for-profit corporations to administer, design, develop and/or implement Stellar Community proposal activities. The participant is also expected to identify a development team to plan and monitor implementation, which should include individuals with expertise and experience in successful community and economic development, project development and/or housing finance and development.

Letter of Interest Submission Packet Requirements

In order to submit a successful Letter of Interest and to be considered for the finalist phase you must:

- Submit Narrative Summary, 3-5 page limit. The Narrative Summary MUST answer the questions found in the section below.
- Have a Comprehensive Community Plan (or a similar planning document approved by the participating agencies) that was completed or updated within the past seven years. Submit current council adoption document.
- Submit Stellar Communities Information Sheet.
- Submit a clear, **color** map (8 ½ x 11) of the community with proposed target area boundaries and past, current and proposed projects identified.
- Submit Project Matrix form.
- Submit Authorization to Submit form.
- If the community is located within a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area, the LOI submission must include a letter of acknowledgement from the MPO Chief Executive Officer.

Narrative Summary for Letter of Interest

No Letter of Interest will be considered without the participant's submission of a brief narrative summary (limit 3-5 pages). The participant MUST answer the questions below. Refer to the definitions when answering the questions.

- Describe the ultimate outcome(s) for the Stellar Community proposal. What does the proposal aim to achieve with Stellar Community designation?
- Describe the targeted area. Include previous planning and implementation of projects in the proposed targeted area. Include recently completed projects, projects underway and future projects.

- Describe the local and regional impact and how future investment will be attracted to the community.
- Explain the reasonableness of project scope. Address the following:
 - Describe how the proposed projects will be completed within the four-year timeframe.
 - Describe how the proposed project costs are feasible.
 - Describe local financing for proposed projects.
 - Describe how proposed projects will leverage additional resources.
- Demonstrate readiness status.
- Describe the leadership capacity:
 - Briefly describe the development team.
 - Describe the development team's ability to implement a multi-project plan.
- Describe public participation and community engagement process.
- Describe the community's ability to maintain the Stellar projects as well as to continue additional community development efforts after the Stellar designation period has ended.
- Describe how a Stellar Community designation will be used to market the community to attract residents and businesses.
- For previous Stellar Community finalists describe how the previous Strategic Investment Plan has been implemented and justify the need for updates to the Strategic Investment Plan.
- Are you in compliance and in good standing with all partner agencies? If no, please explain.

Submission of the Letter of Interest Packet

Submit an electronic copy of the following completed documents via the FTP site:

1. Comprehensive Plan Adoption Resolution
2. Narrative Summary
3. Stellar Communities Information Sheet
4. Stellar Communities Project Matrix
5. Map
6. Signed Authorization to Submit Form
7. Letter of acknowledgement from the MPO Chief Executive Officer (only applicable to communities in a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area)

We will only accept PDF format. Submissions can be made at any time before 5:00 PM EST on March 11, 2016. Please note submissions will have a time stamp of when it was sent. In fairness to all, late submissions will not be accepted.

To create a user name and password for the FTP site, please email stellarcommunities@ocra.in.gov with the following information:

- Full Name
- Email
- Preferred Password

- Community Name (i.e. City/Town of...)

You will be contacted within 48 hours of your email.

There will be a free Stellar Communities Informational Forum/Workshop for communities on Wednesday, January 27 from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. EST at The Garrison at Ft. Benjamin Harrison State Park, Indianapolis.

Registration for this event is restricted to the Chief Elected Official and up to four key partners of their choosing.

To register, click the link below.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2016-stellar-communities-designation-program-informational-workshop-tickets-20636196419>

For those interested in overnight accommodations, you may contact Corrie Scott at 800-824-2476 or coscott@ocra.in.gov for a list of nearby hotels.

Stellar Communities Program Questions

Email specific questions regarding the Letter of Interest or the Stellar Communities Program can be sent to stellarcommunities@ocra.in.gov.